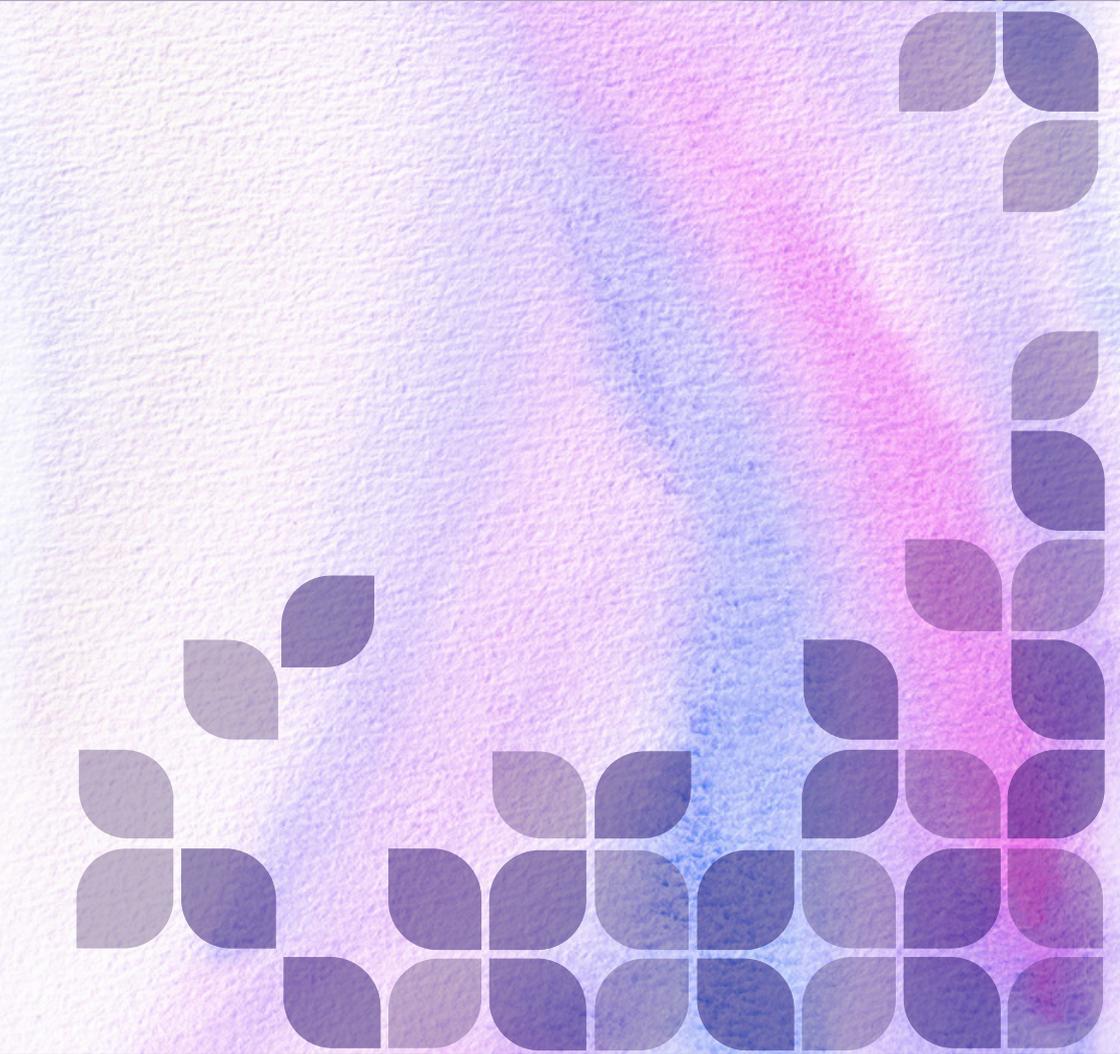




Advice for Birth Parents



What is adoption?

Adoption is a way to provide a loving home for children who cannot grow up and be looked after by their birth parents or other birth family members.

Once a child has been adopted, all parental rights and responsibilities are passed to the adoptive parents. The child's birth parents will no longer be the child's legal parents. Adoption is a permanent legal arrangement and does not end when the child becomes 16. In many cases, the birth parents will not be able to see the child any more although there may be other contact arrangements.



If adoption is being considered for a child

Before a child is adopted, the child's social worker will write a detailed report giving reasons why the child should be adopted. Birth parents are given the opportunity to contribute to it and to read what has been written about them.

The report is then considered by Perth and Kinross Fostering and Permanence Panel who will make a recommendation about whether they agree with the plan that your child should be adopted. You will be invited to attend as the Panel are very keen to hear your views about the plan being suggested for your child.

Our leaflet about the Fostering and Permanence Panel will give you more information about what to expect. This is available from Colonsay Resource Centre or from the Perth & Kinross Council website.

If the Panel consider that adoption is the right choice for your child, they will make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker who will make a decision within 14 days. You will receive this decision in writing.

The adoption does not become finalised until a decision is made by a Court.

How is a new family chosen for a child?

All people who want to adopt children go through a full and thorough assessment to make sure they have the skills required and are suitable to become adoptive parents. This involves preparation training and several months of meetings with a social worker as well as checks of criminal records, social work records, health checks and a check on the safety of their home. Social workers also speak to people who know the adopters well and will speak to their employers. The assessment focuses on the adopter's ability to provide safe and loving care to a child and promote their interests throughout their life.

Moving to a new family

When a family has been chosen for your child, the adopters meet the social worker, the child's foster carer, the medical adviser and anyone else who knows your child well. This ensures they have a full picture of your child and what kind of care they need.

If your child is old enough, they will hear and see information about the family and, even if they are quite small, will have a photo album to help them prepare to meet them.

Your child will meet the new family in the foster carer's home, where they feel safe and secure. The introductions to the new family are planned carefully and will progress at your child's pace until they are ready to move.

Contact with your child

Social workers may have decided that it is not in your child's best interests to have future face to face contact with you. Nevertheless, we recognise that some forms of contact can be very helpful to children as they grow up. Perth & Kinross Council has an Adoption Postbox Scheme which means that birth parents and adopters can exchange information, usually once a year. A leaflet is available which will give you more information.

If it has been agreed that your child should have direct contact with you and/or other members of their birth family, then social workers will make arrangements.



Whatever the arrangements for future contact, it is important for your child to know that they are adopted and to know as much as possible about their birth family. For this reason, we would like to encourage you to share as much information as you can about you and your family, including information about health which will be important to your child as they grow up. We will give this information to the adoptive family so that they are able to share this with the child.

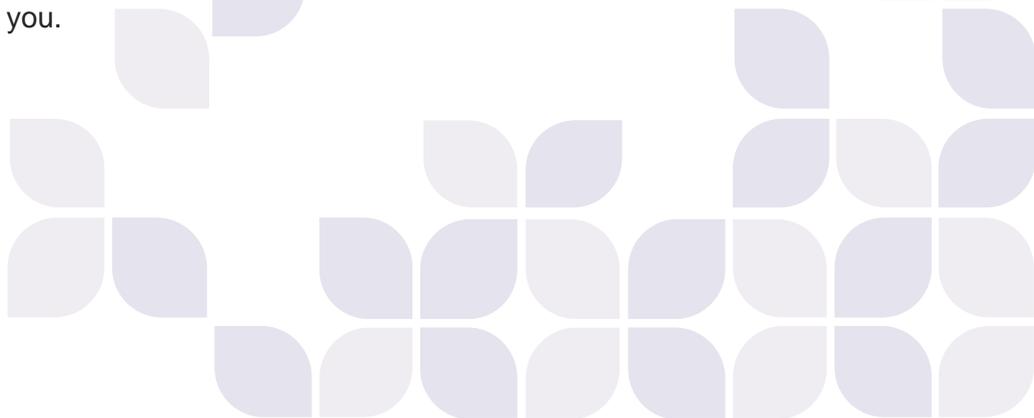
Support after the move to the adoptive family

We will continue to offer support to your child and to the adoptive family for as long as they need it. They can ask for help at any point as your child grows up.

What happens when my child is an adult?

By law, we have to keep adoption files for 100 years. An adopted person can ask to see their adoption record when they are 16. The file will contain information about the child's adoption and the reasons it was necessary. All adopted people have the right to receive a copy of their original birth certificate when they are 16. This information may make it possible for your child to trace you if they wish.

If you or another birth relative wishes to make contact with a person adopted as a child, we can offer you support. All information about an adopted person remains confidential and any decisions about an exchange of information or a reunion lie completely with the adopted person. However, we are able to act as an intermediary to explore this for you.



Services at Birthlink

Birthlink is an organisation based in Edinburgh which offers a tracing service for people affected by adoption who do not wish or feel able to do this for themselves.

Birthlink is responsible for the Adoption Contact Register for Scotland. The Register provides a confidential, central point of contact between adults who have been separated by adoption and serves the needs of adopted adults and birth relatives. The Register can be used to link any two parties who have registered and want this to happen. This is done through a social worker and in negotiation with each person.

Birthlink also have an Adoption Counselling Centre which offers information and advice about adoption issues which affects adults.

Birthlink charge a fee for their services.

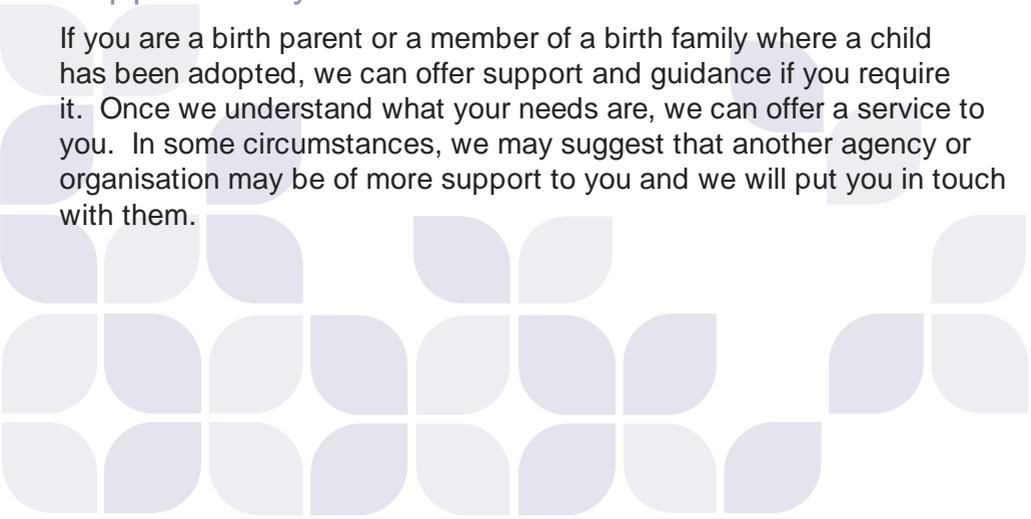
Birthlink

21 Castle Street
EDINBURGH
EH2 3DN

Tel 0131 225 6441
www.birthlink.org.uk

Support for you

If you are a birth parent or a member of a birth family where a child has been adopted, we can offer support and guidance if you require it. Once we understand what your needs are, we can offer a service to you. In some circumstances, we may suggest that another agency or organisation may be of more support to you and we will put you in touch with them.



Complaints

Whilst it is Perth & Kinross Council's intention to provide a good service at all times, if you have a complaint, please contact the team leader of the Permanence Team in the first instance. If the situation cannot be resolved to your satisfaction, please ask for the leaflet *'Your right to be heard, our duty to listen'* which is available from social work offices and on the Perth & Kinross Council website.

The Care Inspectorate

Compass House
Riverside Drive
DUNDEE
DD1 4NY

Tel 01382 207200
www.careinspectorate.com

If you wish to discuss any aspect of adoption, please contact us:

Permanence Team

Education & Children's Services
Perth & Kinross Council
AlmondBank House
Lewis Place
PERTH
PH1 3BD

Tel 01738 472260
Email ECSfosteringandadoption@pkc.gov.uk





If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.